

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 L-02 FRB-03 OMB-01 TAR-01

SP-02 AGR-05 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 OIC-02 SIL-01 STR-04 TRSE-00 CIEP-01

CEA-01 H-02 OES-03 SS-15 NSC-05 OFA-01 IGA-01 DODE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 HUD-01 DIWY-01 CU-02 /114 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6294

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MONTREAL

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, UNDP, GB

SUBJ: CERP 0008 - EVALUATION OF UN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

LONDON FOR IMCO, MONTREAL FOR ICAO, PARIS FOR UNESCO,
ROME FOR FODAG, VIENNA FOR IAEA AND UNIDO

REF: (A) STATE 64907; (B) LIBREVILLE A-23, 4/15/75

1. SUMMARY. UNDP HAS BEEN PROVIDING VALUABLE AND NECESSARY
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO GABON. IN PAST YEAR RES REP HAS
CONSOLIDATED MOST OF PROJECTS IN AREA OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
IN ORDER TO OBTAIN BIGGER IMPACT FOR PROGRAM AS WHOLE AND
TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN AREA WHERE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE
AND BILATERAL AID LEAST ABLE TO REACH. RES REP WORKS
CLOSELY WITH VARIOUS UN BODIES AND BILATERAL DONORS AND
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IS BEGINNING TO GET BETTER COOPERATION FROM GOG, THOUGH

SIGNIFICANT GOG PARTICIPATION IN REVIEWS OF
TOTAL ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO COUNTRY IS STILL SOMETHING
FOR FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. INFO THIS TELEGRAM PRIMARILY BASED ON CONVERSATION
WITH UNDP RES REP GERALD WATTERSON, AND RESPONSES KEYED
TO NUMBERING OF PARAGRAPHS REFTEL.

A. ROLE OF UNDP IN UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM. RES REP IS
WITHOUT QUESTION THE EFFECTIVE LEADER OF ALL UNDP ACTIVITIES
AND COORDINATOR OF ALL OTHER UN ASSISTANCE. RELATIONS
WITH UNICEF AND IBRD ARE CLOSE AND THEIR ACTIVITIES
IN GABON CAREFULLY COORDINATED WITH UNDP REP AND CARRIED
OUT IN COOPERATION WITH HIM. WATTERSON'S RELATIONS WITH
HEADQUARTERS OF VARIOUS UN AGENCIES APPEARS SATISFACTORY
AND HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH HOST GOVERNMENT EXCELLENT,
THOUGH, AS WILL BE SEEN BELOW, HE HAS SAME PROBLEMS AS
EVERYONE HERE IN FINDING KEY PEOPLE IN OFFICE AND GETTING
THEM TO TAKE ACTION.

B. COORDINATION OF ALL EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE. ONE OF
WATTERSON'S PRINCIPAL GOALS HAS BEEN TO SET UP SYSTEM
COORDINATING ALL BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE. IDEALLY, THE RES REP WOULD BE THE FOCAL POINT
OF SUCH A REVIEW AND, ONCE IT WAS COMPLETED, UNDP WOULD
ATTEMPT TO FILL IN THE GAPS IN THE VARIOUS BILATERAL
AID PROGRAMS. ALTHOUGH GOG HAS EXPRESSED AGREEMENT
WITH IDEA, IT HAS YET TO BE IMPLEMENTED. BECAUSE OF THIS
LACK OF GENERAL PLANNING, RES REP RECENTLY OBTAINED GOG
AGREEMENT TO START ECONOMIC PLANNING PROJECT. UNDER THIS
PROJECT, PLANNING UNIT WILL BE SET UP WITH UNDP STAFFING
IN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WHICH IS IN CHARGE OF DEVELOPMENT
OF LARGEST PORTION OF COUNTRY--RURAL AREA. GOG HAS
LAND USE PLAN FOR COUNTRY BUT ONLY ON PAPER. INPUT FOR
PLAN SUPPOSED TO COME FROM VARIOUS MINISTRIES' PLANNING
UNITS AND THEN BE ASSEMBLED IN MINISTRY OF PLAN, BUT THIS
HAS NOT HAPPENED. ECONOMIC PLANNING PROJECT WILL DEVELOP
RATIONAL LAND USE PLAN AND RES REP CONFIDENT THIS
PROJECT WILL ALSO PROVIDE RATIONAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION
OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN AT LEAST MOST IMPORTANT
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AREA OF COUNTRY-RURAL--AND IF SUCCESSFUL WILL SPREAD TO
ECONOMY AS WHOLE.

C. ROLE OF RES REP VIS-A-VIS OTHER UN SYSTEM ACTIVITIES.
RES REP REPRESENTS ALL OTHER UN BODIES IN GABON AND WOULD
COORDINATE ALL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING THOSE OF "AD HOC"
NATURE. WATTERSON HAS NO PROBLEMS WITH ANY OF OTHER UN
BODIES BUT BELIEVES THAT COMPLETE DECENTRALIZATION

WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE WAY FOR UNDP TO OPERATE. CURRENTLY, THE UN IS ONLY "HALFWAY" DECENTRALIZED AS VARIOUS UN BODIES HAVE REGIONAL OFFICES WITH THE RES REP RESPONSIBLE FOR PROGRAMS AT COUNTRY LEVEL. THESE REGIONAL OFFICES SERVE MAINLY AS ADDITIONAL BUREAUCRATIC LAYER AND ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY FAMILIAR WITH LOCAL SCENE IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE AID AND SUPPORT. WATTERSON BELIEVES VARIOUS UN BODIES SHOULD COMPLETELY DECENTRALIZE, PUTTING COMPETENT MAN IN EACH COUNTRY TO EXECUTE ITS PROGRAMS AND USING HOME OFFICE AS RESERVOIR OF LATEST TECHNICAL INFORMATION.

D. COUNTRY PROGRAM REVIEWS. WATTERSON BELIEVES PROGRAM REVIEWS ARE BASICALLY SOUND AND WILL IMPROVE IN GABON. DURING LAST YEAR (WHICH WAS WATTERSON'S FIRST IN LIBREVILLE) HE ESTIMATES THAT ONLY ABOUT TEN PERCENT OF CONCERNED GOG MINISTRIES SHOWED UP FOR PROGRAM REVIEWS. WATTERSON MADE IT CLEAR THAT, IF MINISTRIES WERE NOT PRESENT, PROJECTS WOULD SIMPLY NOT BE DONE, AND SEVERAL PROJECTS WERE IN FACT CANCELED OR CURTAILED. THIS HAS HAD DESIRED EFFECT, AND ATTE DANCE ON GOG SIDE HAS RECENTLY BEEN MUCH BETTER. WATTERSON BELIEVES PROGRAM REVIEWS EXTREMELY USEFUL TOOL AS THEY ENABLE HIM TO GET BILATERAL DONORS TOGETHER WITH GOG AND PERSONNEL OF VARIOUS UN AGENCIES AND HAMMER OUT BOTH PROBLEMS AND FUTURE PROGRAMS. WATTERSON STATED THAT NOW THAT REVIEW WORKING REASONABLY WELL ON PROJECT LEVEL, HE HOPES TO BE ABLE TO EXPAND THIS GRADUALLY TO OVERALL REVIEW OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN GABON (B ABOVE).

E. APPRAISAL OF PROPOSED PROJECTS. EMBOFFS MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH RES REP AND OFTEN DISCUSS ONGOING OR PLANNED PROJECTS WITH HIM. WATTERSON CERTAINLY AWARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF WHAT U.S. AID IS DOING IN GABON BUT, AS QUANTITY OF U.S. AID TO GABON IS SMALL, THERE IS NO OVERLAP PROBLEM AS MIGHT EXIST IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

F. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION. WHEN WATTERSON ARRIVED IN GABON YEAR AGO, UNDP HAD 23 PROJECTS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT ECONOMY--ONE FOR THIS MINISTER, ONE FOR THAT MINISTER. PROJECTS WERE ALL SEPARATE ENTITIES AND THERE WAS LITTLE IF ANY COORDINATION BETWEEN THEM. AS A RESULT UNDP WAS NOT HAVING BROAD IMPACT ON COUNTRY. THUS, IN ORDER TO CORRECT THIS DEFICIENCY, WATTERSON HAS TRIED TO RELATE ALL PROJECTS TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR.

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ACTION IO-10

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R 141500Z APR 75

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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LONDON FOR IMCO, MONTREAL FOR ICAO, PARIS FOR UNESCO,
ROME FOR FODAG, VIENNA FOR IAEA AND UNIDO

REF: (A) STATE 64907; (B) LIBREVILLE A-23, 4/15/75

THIS SECTOR CHOSEN BECAUSE IT PERHAPS MOST UNDERDEVELOPED IN
GABON, TOUCHES MOST GABONESE, AND IS AREA WHERE PRIVATE ENTER-
PRISE AND/OR BILATERAL DONORS HAVE MORE DIFFICULTY
GETTING EFFECTIVELY INVOLVED. ALSO, WATTERSON IS
PROFESSIONAL FORESTER AND HAS HAD TWENTY YEARS EXPERIENCE
WITH FAO. IN ONE OF HIS MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT BONGO,
WATTERSON SAID HE BLUNTLY TOLD PRESIDENT THAT RURAL
AREA MUST BE DEVELOPED AS GABON WILL SOON BE AT MERCY
OF OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING ITS NEIGHBORS, TO FEED
ITS PEOPLE, WHICH OBVIOUSLY INTOLERABLE POLITICAL SITUATION.
AS RESULT (ACCORDING TO WATTERSON), FIFTEEN PERCENT
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OF 1975 GOG BUDGET IS FOR ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH WILL INCREASE POSSIBILITIES OF EVACUATING PRODUCE FROM RURAL AREAS, AND GOG ADVANCED BY ONE YEAR OPENING OF UN TRAINING CENTER FOR RURAL ACTIVITIES IN OYEM. EMBASSY ACTIVELY ENCOURAGES THIS EMPHASIS ON PART OF UNDP ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT BECAUSE WE BELIEVE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SECTOR CRUCIAL TO LONG-RANGE FUTURE OF GABON. IN ADDITION, CONCENTRATION OF MOST PROJECTS IN THIS AREA MEANS PROJECTS ARE MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE-- BENEFITS FROM ONE PROJECT AID IN IMPLEMENTING ANOTHER-- AND PROJECTS BUILD ON ONE ANOTHER. THIS STRIKES US AS BEING MOST RATIONAL USE OF UNDP RESOURCES. BIGGEST DIFFICULTY IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION HAS BEEN SMALL SIZE OF TOTAL GABONESE POPULATION AND RESULTING SMALL NUMBER OF TRAINED INDIVIDUALS. THIS PROBLEM, WHICH PERHAPS UNIQUE IN UNDP COUNTRIES, RESULTS IN LACK OF COUNTERPART STAFF AND LACK OF MOTIVATION ON PART OF COUNTERPARTS THAT ARE FOUND SINCE THEY CAN EASILY FIND ANOTHER JOB. THIS MAY EVENTUALLY INFLUENCE NORMAL UN POLICY OF MAKING EXPERTS AS DISPENSABLE AS POSSIBLE AND QUICKLY REPLACING THEM WITH TRAINED NATIONALS. EQUALLY BAD IS FACT THAT THERE ARE NO PEOPLE TO RUN GOVERNMENT PORTION OF PROJECTS AND, IN ORDER TO GET ANYTHING DONE, IT OFTEN NECESSARY TO INVOLVE ALREADY OVER-WORKED MINISTERS. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE SERIOUS MATERIAL AND PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH LIVING IN GABON. COST OF LIVING EXTREMELY HIGH, THERE ARE FEW DIVERSIONS IN LIBREVILLE, AND HOUSING SITUATION FOR EXPERTS IS POOR. THUS, IT DIFFICULT TO ATTRACT AND KEEP EXPERTS AND, IN ANY EVENT, DISCONTENTED EXPERT TENDS TO BE LESS PRODUCTIVE ON JOB. WATTERSON HAS TRIED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT HOUSING PROBLEM BY PROPOSING THAT GOG TAKE LOAN FROM UNDP TO BUILD ADEQUATE HOUSING FOR EXPERTS AND REPAY LOAN BY RENTS THEY WOULD RECEIVE. GOVERNMENT HAS NEVER REPLIED TO THIS PROPOSAL, AGAIN BASICALLY BECAUSE OF LACK OF STAFF. WATTERSON BELIEVES THESE HUMAN PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTOR (THOUGH NOT ONLY ONE) IN CAUSING WEAK PROJECTS. THUS, TWO WEAK PROJECTS--ZOOLOGY PROJECT 70/002 AND TRANSPORTATION PROJECT 70/007--WHICH SUFFERED FROM LACK OF COUNTERPARTS AND GUIDANCE FROM GOG, WERE TERMINATED. IN EMBASSY'S OPINION, DIFFICULTY IN FINDING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COUNTERPARTS AND LACK OF PEOPLE TO RUN GOVERNMENT PORTION OF PROJECTS FURTHER POINT OUT WISDOM OF EMPHASIZING ONE SECTOR-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-- IN ORDER TO HUSBAND WHAT HUMAN RESOURCES THERE ARE AND APPLY THEM TO AS MANY PROJECTS

AS POSSIBLE.

G. PROJECT EVALUATION. AS DISCUSSED IN B AND D ABOVE, TRIPARTITE REVIEW SYSTEM HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL, BUT PROGRESS IS BEING MADE. WHEN POSSIBLE TO IMPLEMENT PROCEDURE, IT HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE EFFECTIVE. RES REP'S LAST ANNUAL REPORT DATED JULY 1974 (COPY BEING FORWARDED DEPT. REF B) IS WELL WRITTEN DISCUSSION OF OVERALL PROGRAM AND VARIOUS PROJECTS. IT CONTAINS OVERVIEW STATEMENT BY WATTERSON WHERE HE FRANKLY DISCUSSES PROBLEMS MENTIONED ABOVE SUCH AS LACK OF GOG PARTICIPATION IN REVIEWS OF VARIOUS PROJECTS, TOTAL COUNTRY PROGRAM AND COORDINATION OF ALL EXTERNAL RESISTANCE. ALSO INCLUDED IS DISCUSSION OF ONGOING PROJECTS, INCLUDING COMMENTS ON SUCCESS OF FUTURE OF EACH. BASIC IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT DISCUSSED ABOVE--CONCENTRATION OF UNDP EFFORTS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NECESSITY FOR MORE PARTICIPATION BY GOG IN PROJECTS AND REVIEW PROCESS.

H. WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT. BECAUSE OF ITS LOW POPULATION, GABON HAS PARTICULAR NEED TO UTILIZE ITS FEMALE POPULATION. WATTERSON BROUGHT THIS UP WITH PRESIDENT BONGO WHO RECOGNIZES IT FOOLISH TO LEAVE HALF HIS SMALL POPULATION IDLE. THUS, RECENTLY WOMEN HAVE BEEN GIVEN INCREASED ATTENTION IN DEVELOPMENT WHICH TOUCHES AREAS WHERE POPULATION SMALLEST. UNDP AGRICULTURAL TRAINING SCHOOL AT OYEM SCHEDULED TO OPEN SOON WILL HAVE WOMEN AMONG STUDENTS. AMONG UNDP PERSONNEL, ACTING PROGRAM OFFICER FEMALE, AND WATTERSON HAS PROPOSED THAT FEMALE EXPERTS COME TO WORK ON OTHER PROJECTS, SPECIFICALLY THE MAISON DES FEMMES, BUT HAS AS YET RECEIVED NO RESPONSE FROM GOG.

I. FOLLOW-UP WITH UNDP AND EXECUTING AGENCIES. WATTERSON'S OWN PERSONAL OPINION IS THAT ONE THING THAT GOVERNMENTS SHOULD ATTEMPT TO DO WITH UNDP PROGRAM IS TO COMPLETELY DECENTRALIZE IT. AS POINTED OUT IN C ABOVE, WATTERSON BELIEVES THAT DECENTRALIZATION HAS ONLY GONE HALFWAY AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHOULD GO ALL THE WAY. HEADQUARTERS SHOULD NOT PLAN AND EXECUTE BUT RATHER BE REPOSITORIES OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION. REGIONAL OFFICES NOW EXISTING CANNOT PLAN AND EXECUTE BECAUSE THEY ARE TOO FAR AWAY AND DO NOT KNOW LOCAL SITUATION IN EACH COUNTRY. WHAT WATTERSON WOULD LIKE TO SEE IS ELIMINATION OF REGIONAL OFFICES AND NOMINATION OF SEVERAL MORE PROGRAM OFFICERS--EACH A TECHNICIAN IN CERTAIN AREA--TO VARIOUS COUNTRIES. HE BELIEVES THIS WOULD CUT NECESSARY STAFF BY AT LEAST A THIRD AND THUS SAVE MONEY AS WELL AS TIME SINCE ONE LAYER OF BUREAUCRACY WOULD BE REMOVED AS WELL. PROGRAM OFFICER IN FIELD WOULD

THUS BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PLANNING AND EXECUTING PROJECTS
AND WOULD HAVE NECESSARY ACCESS TO LOCAL OFFICIALS TO DO
SO. WATTERSON STRESSED THAT THESE ONLY HIS PERSONAL VIEWS,
THAT HE HAS NEVER DISCUSSED THEM WITH HIS SUPERIORS, BUT
THAT IN HIS OPINION THIS KEY AREA WHERE UNDP PROGRAM CAN BE
IMPROVED.COUNTRYMAN

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